— Country level appraisal of habitat fragmentation has been done to facilitate restorative inputs.

**Poaching in Bandhavgarh sanctuary**

339. SHRI KALRAJ MISHRA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Bandhavgarh sanctuary in Madhya Pradesh continues to be a poacher's paradise and hunting ground for tigers;

(b) if so, the number of cases to tiger poaching detected or reported during 2004-05 and so far; and

(c) whether a tiger with wire-noose around its neck was spotted in early November this year; and if so, the steps taken and being taken by Government to effectively prevent tiger hunting in Bandhavgarh and other sanctuaries in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) and (b) No, Sir. As per information received from the State, there has been no instance of tiger poaching during 2004-05 and till date.

(c) As per information received from State, a male tiger with a wirenoose around his neck was spotted in the park on 4.11.2005, which was removed by the park authorities the next day. The steps taken by the Government of India for protecting wildlife are stated at Statement.

***Statement***

Steps taken by the Government of India for protecting wildlife

(i) Legal protection has been provided to wild animals including tigers against hunting and commercial exploitation under the provisions of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.

(ii) Financial and technical help is being extended to States under Centrally Sponsored Schemes for enhancing the capacity and infrastructure to provide effective protection to wild animals.

(iii) The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has been empowered under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 to apprehend and prosecure wildlife offenders.

(iv) The Ministry of Home Affairs has addressed all State Governments to lend a helping hand to the field formations to curb poaching and illegal trade in wildlife.

(v) A National Wildlife Action Plan (2002-2016) has been launched with several action points and priority projects for conservation and protection of wildlife in the country.

**Bt. Cotton**

340. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Central Institute for Cotton Research, Nagpur has said that certain varieties of Bt. Cotton would not be successful in India;

(b) if so, the details of the findings; and

(c) the details of the action taken by the Genetic Engineering Approval Committee (GEAC) in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) The reports of the Central Institute for cotton Research indicates that Bt. technology is effective in controlling bollworms, a major pest in cotton crop.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

**Forest cover**

341. SHRI N. R. GOVINDARAJAR: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether any special schemes have been formulated in the Tenth Plan to bring 33 per cent of the country under forests cover by 2012.

(b) if so, the details thereof;